

# 1840's Saw Great Improvements To D & H Canal; Delaware Aqueduct Used In 1849

## John A. Roebling, Who Later Built Brooklyn Bridge, Designed Structure For D. & H.; Same Bridge Believed Oldest Suspension Still In Use

Today The News presents the sixth article in the series on the Delaware and Hudson Canal, pioneer carrier of anthracite coal, which was published originally in the Monthly Bulletin of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Department of Public Affairs. The articles were written by E. D. LeRoy, member of the Board of Trustees of the Wayne County Historical Society.

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(Sixth Article of Series)

The year 1843 was the first during which enlarged capacity of the canal was available for the entire season, but even though no less than ninety-seven new boats were put upon the canal that year, there still remained many "Flickers" whose owners were put at a further disadvantage by the reduction in the freight rate to \$1.03 per ton for the trip. This reduction affected, in particular, those whose boats were then paid for as in addition the installment deduction was also reduced by the company to \$7.00 per trip. True, with their "hipped" boats they could carry greater tonnage than before, but still they grumbled. The canal company, summarizing the substantial saving in cost per ton resulting from the improvements already made upon the canal, decided again to increase the depth to five and one-half feet, which would make possible the use of boats fifty tons capacity.

Work on this enlargement was begun in 1845 and continued

through 1846 but was not completed until the following year, although with this enlargement in prospect about a hundred boats of fifty-ton capacity were built and put in operation during these years. However, until the full head of water could be let into the canal, these boats were not loaded to their full capacity. In fact, even if the enlargement could have been completed by 1845, it is probable that full advantage could not have been taken because of a severe drought which extended over a period of eight weeks that summer, making it impossible to load the boats even to their former capacity. The canal company, to some extent, compensated the boatmen for their loss, by returning the freight rate, which had been cut to 97 cents, to the former rate of \$1.03 per ton.

While during 1846 the head of water throughout a large section of the canal had been increased, progress was much slower than had been expected. Even so, it seems that the bed of the canal was now more smooth and as a consequence handling of the boats was easier. Apparently with this in mind the canal company further reduced the freight rate on coal but, as an inducement to the boatmen to make speedier trips, a sliding scale was at this time inaugurated allowing